

three piece romance

*wishbone, backbone, funny
bone - I*

punk_rock_yuppie

three piece romance by punk_rock_yuppie

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Summary:

Richie has a brilliant plan: he and Eddie want to date Bill, so why not just... start taking him on dates? Not that they tell Bill that's what they're doing. Where would be the fun in that?

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Author's Note:

aaaand here we go, some redbill! (i think some ppl call the ship tozenbrak which is also cute but hannah and i call it redbill and i think it's infinitely funnier)

characters are aged up to the 17/18 range, i wrote this with the setting in mind as fall of their senior year (so 1994). also, non-au but nothing regarding the film is mentioned.

huge thanks, as always, to hannah (cathect) for cheering me on and editing this!! and for helping me come up with the idea, too!!! she's great you should go read her stuff, too.

uhhh i think that's all i've got to say. enjoy!

“It’s a stupid plan.”

“But you agree, it’s a plan.”

Eddie scowls and hides his face in his hands. Richie just keeps on beaming, delighted with himself. “I hate you so much, Tozier.”

Richie doesn’t bother feigning a wounded look, he just snickers. “No, you don’t.” Then, he leans over and presses a smacking wet kiss to the side of Eddie’s face.

Eddie just sighs and lets himself revel in the touch. “You *are* obnoxious.”

“But you love it,” Richie drawls. He goes in for another kiss and Eddie pushes him away. “C’mon,” Richie whines.

“No, Richie we need a not-stupid plan if this is going to work.”

Richie falls back against the couch with a heavy sigh. “I think it’s a great plan.”

"You know what else you thought was a great plan? Homecoming last year. And you know what was a shit plan? *Homecoming last year*."

The tips of Richie's years turn pink and he sinks further into the couch. "Fine."

Eddie stares at the papers scattered across the table before them. He stares and stares and stares until the words swim in front of his eyes and then in a burst of energy, he shoves them all to the floor.

"Fuck it!" He practically shouts, thankful that Richie's parents aren't home. "We'll go with your plan."

Richie's eyes are shining behind the thick frames of his glasses. "It'll work perfectly, babe, I'm sure of it."

Eddie groans.

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"Hey Bill," Richie announces as they all take a seat at their usual table in the lunchroom. "What's shaking?"

Bill smiles fondly as his lunch tray clatters onto the table after he sits. "N-nothing much Richie. What ab-about you?"

Richie throws an arm around Eddie's shoulders and ignores the way his boyfriend tenses. Beyond the bare bones of 'date Bill,' their plan doesn't have too much to it. They definitely didn't discuss enacting it today, and yet... "Eddie and me are gonna catch a flick this weekend. Wanna come?"

Bill's eyes widen fractionally. "Y-y-you sure?"

Richie nods firmly. "Course. Why wouldn't we want you there, Big Bill?"

"What m-movie were you going t-t-to see?" Bill finally drops his

surprised gaze and starts to pick at his lunch.

Richie shrugs and looks to Eddie. “Dunno. What were you thinking, Eds?”

Eddie scowls at the peanut butter-and-jelly sandwich his mother packed. “We hadn’t decided yet,” he says. “Was there something you wanted to see?” He’s aiming for casual, nonchalant—the exact opposite of Richie’s approach, basically.

Bill hums around a bite of soggy tater tots. “P-P-*Pulp Fiction*? I think it's still i-in the theater. Or maybe *The Pagemaster*?”

Richie rolls his eyes. “Don’t you wanna see something *scary* ?” He goads. “*New Nightmare* is still playing.”

Bill shakes his head. “The l-l-last one wasn't great, I don't want to wa-waste money on the new one.”

Eddie elbows Richie in the side before he can argue. “I think *Pagemaster* would be fun.” He shares a smile with Bill. “Can you give up the horror for one night, Tozier?” He asks with a pointed look at Richie.

“Anything for you two,” Richie says dreamily. His arm around Eddie tightens but he shoots a wink at Bill. A wink that goes entirely unnoticed by Bill, given that he’s once more enthralled with his lunch.

Richie and Eddie share a sideways glance, and then a sideways smile.

Bill pulls into Richie’s driveway at a quarter to six, and Richie turns to Eddie on the porch. “Ready?” He asks.

Eddie squares his shoulders. “As I’ll ever be, I guess.” He kisses Richie briefly, and murmurs against his lips, “shotgun.” Then, Eddie takes off at a sprint to get to the car first.

Richie frowns. "Not fair! You *know* I called shotgun times infinity!" He trudges after his boyfriend and tries to ignore his hammering heart at the fond grin Bill shoots him.

"On *Bev's* car," Eddie hollers as he buckles up.

"It was a blanket infinity!" Richie shouts back even as he clammers into the cramped backseat. He slides into the middle of the seats and after buckling in, he leans forward. "How's it going, Bill?"

"It's g-going." He shrugs as he pulls out of the driveway. "I brought some clothes and sh-shit along, I figured I'd spend the n-night?" Bill makes eye contact with Richie in the rearview mirror, and Richie beams. "I guess that's a y-y—" Bill stops and sighs. "A yes." He says after a long moment.

Eddie reaches out before Richie can, and lays a comforting hand on Bill's shoulder. "Of course."

Richie doesn't bother saying it's his house—his parents aren't home, *again*, and that makes it's as much Eddie's as Richie's. And by extension, as much Bill's.

"We can watch some horror movies when we get back," Richie declares triumphantly. Bill catches Eddie's eyes and Richie watches the unspoken conversation abound. "Who's buying popcorn?" He asks a couple minutes later.

"You," Bill and Eddie say in unison.

Richie can't even bring himself to protest.

"That was g-gr-great," Bill says happily as they leave the theater. He's got a smudge of butter at the corner of his lip that Eddie and Richie both have been eyeing desperately since they first noticed it. "Thanks for inv-inviting me, guys."

"Of course," Eddie jumps in. "Thanks for coming. I know this one,"

he jerks a thumb at Richie, “is hard to be around.”

Richie rolls his eyes and swings his and Eddie’s hands between them with more force. “You both love me, and you know it.”

Eddie gives him a kiss, and Richie watches Bill go pink in the cheeks.

Before he can stop himself, Richie is speaking (what else is new?). “What, no kiss, Big Bill?” Eddie pinches him in the side, *hard*, but Richie ignores it. Bill is flushing worse and worse pink but eventually he steps closer and presses a sweet dry kiss to Richie’s cheek. “Atta boy,” Richie tells him, though his voice is weaker than he intends.

Bill looks away with a shrug. “Let’s g-g-go.”

“Nice going, Tozier,” Eddie mutters as Bill walks a few paces ahead. “You’re gonna scare him off before we even get anywhere.”

Richie’s cheek is burning where Bill kissed him, and his heart is thundering a mile a minute. “Fuck.”

“Yeah, you probably—?”

“No, Eddie, I mean—fuck, I like him.” Richie stops dead and his death grip on Eddie’s hand nearly jerks the smaller boy’s arm out of its socket.

“What? Of course you do, that’s why we’re trying this whole ridiculous plan.”

Richie groans as he watches Bill keep walking, oblivious to the crisis exploding behind him. “No, Eddie I *like* him.” When it’s clear his words aren’t getting through, he takes Eddie’s hand and lays it over his hammering heart. “Get it?”

Eddie’s eyes widen and his eyebrows shoot up in surprise. “Oh.” In the blink of an eye, a sweet smile blooms on his lips. He stares at Richie with a challenge glimmering in his eyes. “Scared, Richie?”

Richie swallows. Out the corner of his eyes, he sees Bill stop and turn around. His lips are moving as if he’s saying something, and Richie watches the surprise dawn on him. He starts to walk back and Richie

hurriedly answers Eddie. “Fucking terrified.”

“H-heh guys, what’s up? Is som-something wrong?”

“Eddie asked me to tie his shoes, sorry about that Bill,” Richie replies immediately. “Let’s hit the road!” He gestures grandly onward and deliberately ignores the irritated glare from Eddie, and the concerned glance from Bill.

“Wanna sleep downstairs?” Richie asks even as he’s already pushing the coffee table out of the way. “Let’s sleep downstairs.”

“That couch is going to kill my back, Richie,” Eddie grumbles. He still hauls out the spare blankets from the hall closet and drags them into the living room.

“I’ll protect you.” Richie says, but he’s absent, and judging by the curious gleam in Bill’s eyes, he notices the oddness.

“Is ev-everything okay?” Bill asks when Eddie and Richie both finally stop moving.

“What? Yeah, of course. Just...” Richie looks around. He’s not really bothered by the lack of his parents. Not anymore, at least. It’s a good excuse though, and he sighs. “You know how it is,” he mutters.

Bill doesn’t look entirely convinced, but he lets it drop which is good enough. “S-so,” he says with a clear change in tone. “Scary movies?”

Richie grins. “Scary movies,” he agrees.

Bill falls asleep before the end of the first film— *Nightmare on Elm Street* , something they’ve all seen a dozen times over—and leaves Eddie and Richie to their own devices. Bill’s wrapped up in the sleeping bag he brought, on the floor just beneath them, and his soft snores are almost drowned out by the film.

“Do you think this is a good idea?” Richie asks quietly. He’s got Eddie

in his arms and they're squeezed together on the couch. Eddie's right, both their backs are going to be wrecked come morning, but the closeness is worth it. Including the closeness to Bill.

"I do," Eddie says, confident even around a yawn. "I think you're scared because, *somehow*, you didn't realize how much you liked him."

"Oh, and you did?"

Eddie shrugs with one shoulder. "Not entirely. But you've always... You and Bill..." Eddie searches for a word, a phrase, but gives up. "There's always been the two of you. It doesn't surprise me. It definitely doesn't scare me."

"How can this not scare you?" Richie hisses. "I'm fucking terrified."

"Of what?" Eddie asks.

"Of—of—?" Richie falters. What is he scared of? Everything, his mind unhelpfully supplies. "Of losing you." He settles on. "Or losing Bill. *Both* of you."

Eddie's face softens immediately. "Richie," he murmurs. His hands gently find Richie's face and pull him in for a kiss. "You're not going to lose me. And I highly doubt you'll ever lose Bill."

"What if he doesn't—?"

"Do you really think he'd stop being friends with us?" Eddie asks. "Is that the Bill Denbrough you know?"

Richie shakes his head.

"No matter what, it's gonna turn out okay." Eddie says it firmly, with such conviction that Richie can't help but kiss him. Eddie squeaks into the kiss but doesn't object. He even lets Richie press him deep into the lumpy couch cushions with the desperation of his touch. They kiss until their eyelids droop and even then, Eddie manages to stay awake long enough to say more. "It'll be okay, Richie. It'll all be okay."

Richie falls asleep smiling.

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“Hey, Bill?” Richie calls out as he hurries to catch up. “You busy?”

Bill shakes his head.

“Wanna come to the arcade with me and Eddie? He’s driving.”

Bill pales and Richie bites back a laugh. Eddie’s a good driver, some might say overcautious, and Richie is a menace in the passenger seat. “I’ll drive myself over, bu-but sure.” He nods and Richie and turns to walk away. Richie catches him by the arm before he can go far, but Bill seems ready to stop. “R-Richie?”

Richie opens his mouth and realizes that for once his goddamn life, he’s got nothing to say.

“Richie?” Bill asks again, taking a step closer. “You’ve b-been acting weird for a while now. I’m g-g-g-getting worried.”

Richie’s chest warms, blooming with affection that fills him to his toes. “Everything’s fine,” he says genuinely. “Just.” He rubs his hand over Bill’s arm and then drops the touch. “I dunno. I’ve missed you, I guess.”

Bill’s eyes light up with kind laughter. “I’m r-r-right here, Richie.”

Richie smiles. “I know. See you at the arcade in ten?”

Bill nods, and this time when he turns away, Richie lets him.

“You’re being suspiciously quiet,” Eddie observes as they pull away from the school.

“Whatever, *mom* ,” Richie snarks back. He’s looking out the window,

he knows he's being quiet, but he can't bring himself to be anything else.

Eddie watches him from the corner of his eye and before long, Richie caves.

"I just really want this to work, okay?" He says it a little sour. The admission sits in his throat, acrid and painful.

"It will," Eddie says with the same confidence he had the night of the movies. "Just trust me on this one."

Richie reaches out and takes one of Eddie's hand off the wheel. Eddie even lets him, which speaks to the gravity of the moment. Richie links their fingers and rests them on the seat in between.

"Have I mentioned lately how much I fucking love you?" Richie asks as they pull into the arcade's parking lot.

"You could stand to mention it more," Eddie teases.

Bill is already there by the time they're out of the car, and he looks ridiculously good. Richie looks over to catch Eddie gaping a bit, and it's a gratifying feeling. Bill is in the same well-worn shirt and torn jeans he was in when Richie saw him before they left, but he's got a bomber jacket on that Richie's never seen.

"Lookin' good, Denbrough," Richie calls out as they get closer.

Bill grins and ducks his head. "It d-doesn't look stupid?" He asks. He shrugs, holds out an arm to show off the detailing of the jacket. It's smooth, leather but softer and creased like nothing they've seen before. It's littered with vintage patches, too, and Richie takes them all in with interest. "F-found it in my grandpa's closet the other weekend. B-b-b-been working up the nerve to w-wear it."

"It looks very nice," Eddie says honestly. He sticks out a hand to feel the material and nods appreciatively. "Very Danny Zuko of you, in a way."

Richie's mind blanks for a second with *that* mental image, and he's only drawn out of the brief reverie by Eddie tugging him along. Bill

leads the way into the arcade and the three of them look around curiously.

“Pinball tourney?” Eddie asks as he peers around Richie to where most of the pinball machines are unoccupied.

“I was thinking skee-ball,” Richie admits with a longing stare shot toward the four ramps at the far end of the arcade.

“You’re sh-shit at skee-ball, Richie.”

Richie pouts at Bill. “But it’s fun,” he draws out the last word until Eddie none too subtly steps on his toes.

“No-not when you throw the skee-balls so h-hard they fly b-back at us,” Bill says with a smile. “I think p-p-pinball is a good idea.”

Richie gestures toward the machines. “Fine, fine, I know when I’m outvoted. Lead the way, Zuko.”

Bill’s ears turn pink but he does lead the way. Eddie and Richie follow close at his heels and together the three of them survey what machines are unoccupied.

“There’s *Beetlejuice* .”

“That one’s rigged,” Eddie whines.

“There’s the *Doctor Wh-Who* one,” Bill nods to the machine at the far end that’s just been vacated.

“That one’s *boring* ,” Eddie says with a frown.

“Well fuck, Kaspbrak, what do *you* wanna play?”

Eddie taps his chin with the hand not linked with Richie’s. “That one,” he points.

“ *Star Wars* , really?” Richie asks with a sigh. “Fine. Pony up your two quarters.”

Eddie passes them along without a care and Bill does, too. Digging

two of his own from the pockets of his jeans, Richie steps up for first go.

“Loser buys dinner?”

“What kind of money do you think I have?” Eddie retorts.

“I can b-b-buy dinner,” Bill interjects.

Richie shakes his head. “Loser buys dinner. Those are the rules.”

Bill rolls his eyes. “Fine, b-b-but just remember that when you lose, T-Tozier.”

“You’re on, Denbrough.”

“I never said dinner was going to be somewhere *fancy* .” Richie gestures emphatically with the floppy mcdouble in his hand. He slurps noisily on his soda and simply grins in the face of Eddie’s death glare.

“If my mom knew we were eating this, this *garbage* .” Despite the venom in his tone, he eats his mc nuggets like they’re going out of style and Richie chokes on a laugh. “She’d have your balls in a blender,” Eddie adds around a mouthful of fries.

Bill clearly has no complaints; as he eats his own burger, he watches Eddie and Richie go back and forth like a tennis volley. He doesn’t chime in, not even to help Eddie gloat about winning pinball ten rounds to none against Richie. He sits back in the old red booth and smiles at the two of them.

Every time Richie catches a glimpse of it out the corner of his eye, his heart starts pounding in double time. Similarly, Eddie gets a far-away look in his eyes and lets out a dreamy little sigh.

Bill doesn’t seem to notice either of these things, and it’s a blessing and a curse.

"T-this was fun," Bill says as they stand around in the McDonalds parking lot. Richie's got a bag of rapidly cooling food for the road, and Eddie keeps stealing glances at it like he's equally intrigued and disgusted. "Thanks for inviting me, g-guys."

Richie shrugs. "Thanks for coming along. Even if you did ruthlessly wipe the floor with me at pinball." He wags a disapproving finger at Bill. "A man doesn't forget a betrayal like that, you know."

Bill throws his head back with a burst of laughter, and Richie focuses on the lines of his throat. Eddie's gaze finally shifts away from the greasy bag of food to Bill's face, and another delicate sigh slips out.

"I s-should get going, it's l-l-late. See you at school to-tomorrow!" He gives them a wave before walking over to his car. Even in the dim lighting of the streetlamps, his lime green 1950 South Dakota glimmers. Watching him, bomber jacket and cuffed jeans and sleek car—Richie very nearly swoons. He would've, except Eddie does it first and Richie has to catch him.

Laughing and blushing they stumble over to Eddie's far less impressive 1986 Buick; it's a dirty orange color, and the seats are torn in inconvenient places, and it smells stale inside no matter what. But it's Eddie's car and Richie doesn't dare say a word against it. Besides, they've made plenty of great memories in that car.

"When are we going to tell Bill what we're doing?" Eddie asks partway through the drive home—tonight, it's Richie's place.

Richie shrugs. "I didn't think we would. He can probably figure it out on his own."

Eddie sputters and even though he shakes with the force of his disbelief, the car doesn't swerve a single bit. "What? You didn't—we're just going to date him, without *telling* him."

"Did I not mention that originally?" Richie asks, not caring about the answer. "Bill's smart, he'll get it." He hopes.

"You're a menace, Richie Tozier," Eddie tells him earnestly.

"But I'm *your* menace," is Richie's cheerful reply.

“God help us all,” Eddie mutters.

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“Are you s-s-sure I won’t be a third wh-wheel?” Bill asks as Eddie drags him along by the wrist. “I do-don’t want to intrude.”

Eddie rolls his eyes, though Bill can’t see that. “You’re never a third wheel, Bill. We wouldn’t invite you if we thought that.”

“I j-just thought you g-guys maybe felt bad for me, or s-s-something.”

Eddie furrows his eyebrows, but Bill doesn’t see that either. “Why would we feel bad for you?”

“B-Because, you and Richie are dating. Bev and Ben are to-together. Mike has been r-really busy at the farm lately and Stan’s got his apprenticeship. I’m k-k-kind of the odd man out.”

Eddie stops abruptly and Bill practically slams into his back. “You listen to me, William Denbrough.” Eddie is short, far shorter than Bill, but that doesn’t make him any less intimidatin. “You are not an odd man out. We don’t invite you because we think you’re lonely. We invite you because we—Richie and I *both* —want you there. We always want you there. Got it?”

Bill nods. “G-got it.”

“Good.”

When they turn to start walking again, Richie is standing a few feet ahead. “Wow, a Kaspbrak lecture at this time of day? You must’ve really fucked up this time, Bill.”

“Shut it, Richie,” Eddie says as he takes Richie by the wrist, too. Then, he’s tugging both boys along; Richie and Bill share a look, both of them confused and concerned.

“Don’t you know w-where we’re going?” Bill asks in a hushed tone,

as if Eddie won't hear him. "When he called, he m-made it sound like you two were going on a date, or so-so-something."

Richie shrugs. "Nope." He pops the 'p' loudly. "Just know Eddie wanted to get out of the house, that's about it." He looks at the back of Eddie's head and wonders what prompted it this time. "He gets this way when his mom irritates him."

Eddie doesn't look back to glare, and doesn't tell him off, which only confirms Richie's suspicions. Eddie hadn't mentioned bringing Bill along, but he's not complaining. It means a lot more than Bill maybe realizes, and Richie can't help but feel like a piece to their puzzle has settled into place.

"Usually he wants to go to the river," Richie adds. At that, Eddie nods, and Richie realizes they're being dragged along to Eddie's car parked by the curb. "River it is."

Twenty minutes later finds them dipping their ankles in the water, sitting on rocks. They're close enough that with each minute shift their knees keep knocking together.

Eddie still hasn't said what had him so riled up before, but he's more relaxed now, and Richie figures it wouldn't do any good to rehash it. Bill hadn't asked, either, and Richie appreciates the tact, not that it's anything new for Bill. When they all first sat down, Bill just put his hand on Eddie's shoulder and squeezed, and that had been enough.

"Thanks for coming," Eddie says softly as a breezy chill whips by. "We should get back."

"Movie night at my place?" Richie volunteers.

Eddie shrugs. "I should probably go home, first."

"T-that's fine. I'd need p-p-pajamas anyway, we can stop by my h-house too."

Richie nods and gestures to Bill as if to say, *see?*

“Alright. Fair warning, you two are staying in the car.”

Richie stands up first and offers a helping hand to both his friends. “Don’t we always?”

Bill shakes his head. “Mrs. K. doesn’t actually m-m-mind me, too much. You’re the one with a lifet-t-time ban.” He grins and dodges a friendly punch to the arm. “I’ll keep an eye on him and ma-make sure he doesn’t chew up the seats, E-Eddie. No worries.”

Eddie laughs at that; it’s Richie’s favorite laugh. His expression is soft but the laugh is loud; his eyes crinkle at the corners and his lips fall open into a perfect ‘o’ and his laugh is the most obnoxious burst of mirth Richie knows.

He looks over at Bill and his heart skips a beat—because the look that Bill is giving Eddie, Richie knows too well. It’s how he looked, *still* looks, at Eddie. Fond, falling in love one second at a time.

Richie chokes on his next breath, but the second he can inhale he feels refreshed. “Let’s go, guys.”

Still snickering under his breath, Eddie leads the way from the river the same as he led them there.

Richie’s parents are home, but they don’t pay the three boys much mind as they come in. They look up briefly, survey Richie and his friends with bored stares and pinched lips, and that’s all. They don’t speak and they don’t ask and Richie hates them for it as much as he appreciates it. Wordlessly, he leads Eddie and Bill up the stairs to his room. Eddie excuses himself to the bathroom down the hall to change into pajamas and brush his teeth, leaving Bill and Richie alone.

“I’ll throw on a record,” Richie says. He turns to his bookshelf full of more records than actual books and taps his chin thoughtfully. “What do you think?” He says over his shoulder. He deliberately keeps his

back turned until Bill comes up beside him. When Richie looks, Bill is in his pajamas: an overlong t-shirt paired with longjohns that hang off his long, lanky legs.

“The Clash,” Bill says as he points to the case.

Richie nods. The first sounds of “Know Your Rights” start to fill Richie’s room just as his bedroom door opens, and Eddie stands in the threshold. Richie keeps it low, lest his parents come knocking, but it’s enough to unsettle the silence that had been looming.

As Eddie slips back into the room, pajama-clad, Richie says, “sorry about my parents. I didn’t think they’d be home.” He turns away at the admission, and shrugs out of his flannel shirt.

He tosses it in the vague direction of his laundry hamper, then lets his jeans puddle on the ground. Where Eddie is in too-big pajama pants that pool at his feet, and Bill is in his longjohns, Richie feels more comfortable in his boxers—not to mention, it makes the other two blush.

Eddie shrugs, and Bill reaches out to squeeze Richie’s shoulder. “N-not a big deal. Right E-Eddie?”

“Right,” Eddie says as he smiles at Richie. “Just being with you two is enough for me.”

Richie leans over and brushes a kiss over Eddie’s lip and as it breaks, he’s struck by the urge to do the same to Bill. The look on Bill’s face is the only thing that stops him (not even Eddie’s insistent, light kicks to Richie’s shin could’ve deterred him). Bill looks stricken, and his chest is rising and falling alarmingly fast. The tips of his ears are pink again and he licks his lips and *fuck*, Richie has to look away.

Richie climbs in bed first, and the moment his back hits the wall he’s able to relax. Eddie crawls in after, and moves impossibly close to leave enough room.

“Uh, guys?” Bill asks with his wide eyes trained on the space left for him.

Eddie just pats the sheets. “C’mon. Not like we haven’t done it

before.”

Bill mutters something that sounds like *not in several years* under his breath, but doesn't protest further. He slides under the covers and maintains what he probably thinks is a respectable distance from Eddie. At least, until Eddie takes him by the arm and hauls him closer.

“Don't think too much, okay?” Eddie mutters, and Richie loves him so much. “Just. Be.”

Bill nods. He gulps so loud it practically echoes over the sounds of The Clash. “Y-yeah, okay.”

Eddie falls asleep first with his back against Richie's chest, and a hand tangled in Bill's shirt. Over him, Richie catches Bill's gaze.

Richie is about to speak but Bill beats him to it. “Is this o-okay, Richie?”

Richie just smiles. “Yeah, Bill. It's perfect.”

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“I d-don't know if this is a good i-i-idea, guys.” Bill wobbles on his skates and clings to the edge of the rink. Richie stands behind him with his arms held out and Eddie leads at the front, looking back every few seconds to ensure neither of them have fallen. “I'm sh-sh-shit at skating.”

“We'll help you, Big Bill!” Richie raises a hand to slap Bill companionably on the back but thinks better of it at the last moment. “We'll catch you,” he adds, earning a warm smile from Eddie.

“It's y-y-your funeral.” Bill slips and digs his nails into the carpeted wall of the rink, as well as into one of Richie's arms. “Or m-maybe mine.”

Richie rolls his eyes and shakes off Bill's grip. Instead he loops their

elbows together while Eddie pries his hand off the wall. He curls his hand around Bill's and gives a tiny tug.

"Come on," Eddie urges. "We won't let you fall."

Bill's gaze slips out to the rink, where hordes of kids and parents alike are skating in circles. It's crowded, unsurprising for a Saturday night, and Richie isn't sure if that makes it better or worse. Eventually though, Bill nods and starts to unsteadily glide along after Eddie, with Richie at his side.

"You're great on a bike, Bill, skates aren't that different," Eddie says as his own rollerblades hit the sleek, smooth flooring. He's not unkind in his words, but Richie watches Bill bristle all the same.

"N-not as controlled," Bill grits out. The minute his skate hits the floor, he starts to slide. Richie grabs the wall for support and holds Bill's arm tighter. "There's no f-fucking handlebars."

Richie snorts but nods his head. "Got us there, Bill. Don't worry, we'll treat you to something nice after this." All three of them make it onto the floor after a little more stumbling. After another couple minutes of getting settled, they're off. Eddie and Richie flank Bill on both sides to keep him upright, and the other skaters steer clear to give them plenty of room.

"This isn't so bad, right Bill?" Richie asks as they take yet another turn without issue. Bill is tense in their arms but there's a smile twitching at the corners of his mouth.

"Not s-s-so bad," he agrees. "Biking is better."

Richie and Eddie smile at each other. "Got it," Eddie says. "No more skate rink dates in the future."

"I never said th-that," Bill said. Richie watches, fascinated, as a blush crawls up Bill's neck. "Is that w-what this is?" He asks in a hush.

Richie catches Eddie's gaze again, and Eddie nods back.

"If you want it to be," Richie replies.

“What do you two wa-want?” Bill asks. He looks at Eddie to his right, then to Richie at his left, then down at their feet.

“Maybe we should be sitting down for this,” Eddie says just after he nearly slips.

Wordlessly, they go another lap until they hit the nearest exit off the rink. Richie and Eddie still stick to Bill’s sides and guide him to the table where they left their bags and jackets.

“I need t-these off,” Bill says as soon as he’s seated. He yanks at the laces and kicks off the skates without care. He turns then, to look at Eddie and Richie. “Well? A-are we going to talk about t-this?”

Richie and Eddie stare at each other. Eddie’s mouth works silently, so Richie steps up to do what he does best.

“We like you, Bill.” Richie bites his tongue for a moment to stem the flow of inevitable word vomit. He takes a deep breath and reigns in the urge to ramble. Instead, he simply says, “a lot.”

Eddie rolls his eyes. “We want to date you.” He says.

Bill’s eyes widen and the blush that’s been crawling up his neck finally reaches his cheeks. “Wh-what?”

Richie finally gives in to the urge to reach out and take Bill’s hand. Eddie does the same, and Bill looks startled and pleased in equal measure.

“We want to be a trio,” Richie continues. “A *ménage à trois* , but not just,” Richie goes pink, “not *just* sex.”

Bill looks even more amused at the embarrassment spreading across Richie’s features. “You guys are s-serious?”

Richie and Eddie nod in unison.

“So instead of j-just asking me, you decided to, what? T-take me on dates?”

Eddie's gaze snaps to Richie, and then so does Bill's. Both are grinning and Richie curses them as the blush on his face worsens. He can feel it blooming in blotchy, uneven spots and he barely resists the urge to hide his face in his hands.

Bill shakes his head fondly. "You're an i-i-idiot, Richie."

"Yeah," Richie agrees. "But I'm... your idiot?" He tries, ignoring Eddie's surprised laugh.

Bill's eyes are sparkling and he squeezes Richie's hand. "Y-yeah, I think you are." He leans over then and kisses Richie softly on the lips. It's dry and chaste and reminds Richie—delightfully—of his first kiss with Eddie. Sweet and simple, lasting for an eternity and not nearly long enough.

Bill pulls back eventually and Richie follows him. He only stops because Eddie kicks him lightly in the shin. Bill turns to look at Eddie in the same moment, and tugs on his hand subtly. Eddie sits up off the bench and leans across the table obediently, but Richie recognizes the tension in his shoulders. He's licking his lips over and over out of nervousness but Bill's expression never changes.

Richie's own breathing catches in his throat as he watches the two of them finally kiss. He wonders if Eddie felt like this, when Bill kissed him and Eddie watched. Elated, swirling with lust and delight. Not a hint of jealousy burning in his chest, only the beginnings of a desperate need to see more, *do* more.

Eddie and Bill break apart softly, hardly a sound made.

"That's a yes, then?" Richie asks. He aims for cheeky but thinks he lands somewhere around breathy, instead.

Bill smiles at them both. "It's a y-y-yes."

"Told you it wasn't a stupid plan," Richie says gleefully.

"Oh n-no, it was a stupid plan," Bill retorts. "It worked, b-b-but that doesn't make it not a stupid pl-plan." He leans over and kisses the indignant pout right from Richie's lips.

“I hate you. Both of you,” he says in the face of Bill’s smirk and Eddie’s laughter.

“No, you don’t,” Bill and Eddie say together.

No, he really doesn’t.

Author’s Note:

come hit me up on [tumblr](#) and yell about IT with me!!